

UNION CREEK WATER TOWER
West Side of State Hwy 62
Prospect Vicinity
Jackson County
Oregon

HABS No. OR-152

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNION CREEK WATER TOWER

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Location: West side of State Highway 62, in Union Creek Resort complex, Rogue River National Forest; 11 miles north of Prospect, Jackson County, Oregon.

USGS Union Creek Quadrangle (7.5'), (formerly USGS Prospect NW Quadrangle [15']); UTM coordinates: 10.545400.475050

Significance: The Union Creek Water Tower is identified as a primary property in the Union Creek Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places); the District is significant as an intact concentration of historically-related structures and features associated with early twentieth century recreation use and Forest Service administration, a complex which utilizes a unifying architectural theme of "Rustic"-style construction dating to the 1920s-1930s. The Water Tower was built in the same style as other Resort buildings, and was one of the tallest domestic water towers in Jackson County.

Description: The Union Creek Water Tower is a shake-over-pole structure, approximately 54 feet tall, 21 feet square at the base (i.e., ground level), and tapering to 12 feet square at the base of the storage tank "cabin" at the top. (NOTE: these measurements are more accurate than those given in the 1979 NRHP nomination.) The framing is composed of peeled, mortised/tenoned and spiked, Douglas-fir poles of various lengths and diameters, with an exterior covering of 30-inch long sugar pine shakes (with 16 inches "to the weather"). The hipped roof of the "cabin" (i.e., the structure which formerly housed the water-tank) is also covered with shakes. Due to severe rot in the base of all four vertical support-poles, the tower now leans approx. 6 degrees from vertical towards the south. Most of the shakes are severely weathered/eroded. Aside from an electrical power line attached to one corner of the tower, it has not been altered. At ground level, the interior has been used for miscellaneous storage (tools, snowmobiles, lumber); the tower has evidently not been used for water storage since sometime in the 1950s.

History: The portion of the Union Creek Resort located on the west side of Highway 62 (the "Crater Lake Highway") was originally platted by the Forest Service as a special use permit resort area in 1922. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Becklehymmer (sometimes shown as "Beckelhymmer" in documents) built a garage/service station, a restaurant ("Beckie's Cafe"), residence, and other structures here beginning in that year and on into the 1930s. The primary clientele of the resort was composed of tourists travelling to Crater Lake National Park (about 10 miles to the east) as well as persons fishing the Rogue River or camping on the National Forest in the vicinity of Union Creek. The Water Tower apparently dates to ca. 1925-32 and was used to store domestic water for use by the Becklehymmers and their guests. No records or firm personal recollections are available, but the tower/tank was probably abandoned for water storage sometime after World War Two.

Sources: USDA Forest Service, "National Register Nomination: Union Creek Historic District," (prepared May 1979, listed on NRHP February 1981).

Brown, Carroll A., "History of the Rogue River National Forest,"
Rogue River National Forest, 1969.

Historian: Jeff LaLande, USDA Forest Service, Rogue River National Forest, 1990.

UNION CREEK WATER TOWER

Union Creek Historic District
Jackson County, Oregon

